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RSE Ventures and Ondas Co-Lead Strategic Investment in FPF Defense to Build the Next Generation of Counter-UAS Interceptors, Anchoring West Palm Beach as America's Emerging Defense-Tech Hub

FPF Defense, led by former Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher C. Miller, is developing AI-enabled kinetic interceptors engineered to close the cost-asymmetry gap against mass-produced one-way attack drones

WEST PALM BEACH, FL / [ACCESS Newswire](#) / July 24, 2026 / [RSE Ventures](#) and [Ondas Inc.](#) (NASDAQ:ONDS) today announced a co-led strategic investment into FPF Defense, a defense technology company developing SmartFlak: an integrated counter-UAS system anchored by the Hammerhead low-cost, autonomous interceptor, purpose-built to destroy Shahed-class one-way attack drones at scale.

Recent conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East have left our military faced with new battlefield realities. A Shahed or Geran-class attack drone costs an adversary roughly \$50,000 to build while the legacy missile interceptors fired to stop it can cost millions of dollars apiece. That asymmetry is the central problem of modern air defense: an enemy who can mass-produce cheap drones drains a defender's stockpiles and budget faster than any Western industrial base can refill them.

Legacy air defenses were designed for exquisite threats and left a vulnerable gap in the medium-range where cheap, mass-launched drones are having an outsized impact on the battlefield. FPF's SmartFlak system is purpose-built to close it: autonomous launch, sophisticated onboard autonomy, and a kinetic interceptor engineered for U.S. mass production, with a cost per shot in the low tens of thousands of dollars. FPF Defense was built by operators who have lived this problem firsthand.

FPF Defense is led by The Honorable Christopher C. Miller, who spent 27 years as a U.S. Army Green Beret - helping lead the first Special Forces teams into Afghanistan after 9/11 and later commanding a battalion from 5th Special Forces Group in Iraq - before serving as Director of the National Counterterrorism Center and Acting Secretary of Defense.

"The cheapest weapons on the battlefield are getting past the most sophisticated defenses we field. I spent 27 years in uniform and served as Acting Secretary of Defense with one job above all others: protect this country and the people who defend it. FPF is how I keep doing that job - making sure no American is ever lost to a threat we had the power to stop," said Christopher C. Miller, CEO of FPF Defense and former Acting Secretary of Defense.

Miller's command-and-policy pedigree is matched by a deep technical and operational bench. Dr. Jeff Maas, a former DARPA program manager, serves as Chief Technology Officer, while Grant Fox, who brings experience from the U.S. Navy and the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU), serves as Chief Operating Officer. Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Christian Sessoms, the fourth founder of FPF Defense, is the Chief Revenue Officer. Sessoms was a career Army Special Forces officer, with extensive post-Army business development success in the defense and technology sectors. The company is advised by General (Ret.) Austin Scott Miller, former Commander of Joint Special Operations Command and the final Commander of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, as well as Lieutenant General (Ret.) Robert "Whaler" Walsh, a career Marine aviator who helped lead the Marine Corps' force-transformation efforts as Commanding General of Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Commander of U.S. Marine Corps Forces Strategic Command, and Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration. Across the organization, the broader team draws on experience from DARPA, DIU, the U.S. military, and the special operations community.

"Ondas is focused on solving the most critical challenges in autonomous and counter-drone warfare, and we uphold the highest standards for the teams we partner with," said Eric Brock, CEO of Ondas. "FPF cleared that bar immediately with a proven team, a disruptive cost advantage, and a mission-critical capability that the nation requires at scale."

As part of the investment, FPF is relocating its headquarters to West Palm Beach, joining Ondas, which has already established its headquarters there as the first of several defense-technology companies expected to anchor the growing ecosystem in South Florida.

FPF Defense becomes another investment in RSE's defense and industrialization portfolio alongside Performance Drone Works (PDW), the veteran-led combat robotics manufacturer co-founded by Matt Higgins, specializing in Group 1-3 unmanned aerial systems (UAS). Higgins has been deeply involved in national defense since serving as Chief Operating Officer of Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, the organization tasked with rebuilding the World Trade Center site.

"I was on the ground on 9/11, so I've experienced firsthand what it means for our nation to be caught off guard. Once again, we find our skies vulnerable to attack, only now the threat is cheap weaponized drones. We cannot defend our homeland from our back foot, nor can we win if defending against a threat costs ten times more than launching it," said Matt Higgins, CEO & Co-founder, RSE Ventures. "FPF solves this cost asymmetry head-on. Their SmartFlak system and Hammerhead interceptor deliver the scalable, high-volume shield needed to dominate the critical 9-to-20 kilometer gap. We are proud to back FPF as they build that multi-layered defense-right here in West Palm."

The deal was led by Nick Perkins, Senior Vice President of Defense & Industrialization at RSE Ventures.

FPF Defense will deploy the investment to:

- Accelerate development and production of the Hammerhead interceptor and SmartFlak integrated launch system
- Establish U.S.-based manufacturing with an NDAA-compliant domestic supply chain

- Expand engineering headcount across autonomy, systems integration, and propulsion
- Build out West Palm Beach headquarters and operational infrastructure

About FPF Defense

FPF Defense develops low-cost, high-volume counter-drone interceptors for U.S. and allied defense. Its flagship SmartFlak system - anchored by the Hammerhead kinetic interceptor - is designed to address the cost asymmetry problem in CUAS defense, targeting the 9-to-20-kilometer engagement gap. Headquartered in West Palm Beach, FL.

About RSE Ventures

Headquartered in West Palm Beach, FL, RSE Ventures is a private investment and innovation firm founded by Stephen Ross and Matt Higgins. RSE builds and invests in category-defining companies across industrialization and defense, sports, media, and consumer. www.rseventures.com

About Ondas Inc.

Ondas Inc. (NASDAQ:ONDS) is a leading global provider of autonomous aerial and ground defense and security and intelligence platforms serving defense, homeland security, public safety and critical infrastructure markets. Headquartered in West Palm Beach, FL. www.ondas.com

Contacts

IR Contact for Ondas Inc.

888-657-2377

ir@ondas.com

Media Contact for Ondas Inc.

Escalate PR

ondas@escalatepr.com

Preston Grimes

Marketing Manager, Ondas Inc.

preston.grimes@ondas.com

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